

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in extending the appreciation of the U.S. House of Representatives to Stephen E. Ewing for his lifelong work in the energy sector, and in wishing him an enjoyable and adventurous retirement.

HIGHEST SIKH RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY SEEMS TO BE UNDER HINDUTVA CONTROL

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, the Council of Khalistan recently sent a letter to Joginder Singh Vedanti, the Jathedar of the Akal Takht, who has been promoting a piece of flim-flam known as the Dasam Granth, in which several writers took a snippet of the writing of the last Sikh guru, Guru Gobind Singh, and added other items, some pornographic, trying to pass it off as the genuine work of Guru Gobind Singh in order to damage the Sikh religion. Jathedar Vedanti's endorsement of the Dasam Granth makes him a participant in this effort to undermine the Sikh culture and religion.

The Council of Khalistan urged the Jathedar to stop diverting the attention of the Sikhs to this severely altered book and instead to focus on the issue of freedom for Khalistan. He noted that on the two occasions last year when Sikh leaders were arrested for making speeches in support of Khalistan and raising a Khalistani flag, there was no protest from Jathedar Vedanti.

It is time for us to support the legitimate aspirations of the Sikhs and all the minorities of India who are seeking their freedom by stopping our aid to India) suspending our trade with that country and by supporting the right to self-determination for all the minority nations of the subcontinent. Self-determination is the essence of democracy. Why can't "the world's largest democracy" hold a simple vote on this fundamental question?

Madam Speaker, I would like to insert the Council of Khalistan's letter to Jathedar Vedanti into the RECORD at this time for the information of the American people.

JANUARY 9, 2007.

DEAR JATHEDAR VEDANTI: I am writing to you about the Dasam Granth, which you have been promoting as the genuine writing of Guru Gobind Singh. The issue of its authorship was settled long ago. As you know, the authors of the Dasam Granth identify themselves within the text and only a small part is written by Guru Gobind Singh. The rest was appended by Hindu writers looking to harm the Sikh religion. Much of it is pornographic. For a jathedar of the Akal Takht to promote it as genuine Sikh scripture, especially since Guru Gobind Singh left the Guruship in the Guru Granth Sahib, is harmful to the Sikh religion and the Sikh Nation. Sikhs should bow only to the Guru Granth Sahib, nothing else.

The Dasam Granth is not the real issue. Do not get sidetracked, and do not sidetrack the Sikh Nation from the real issue, freedom and sovereignty for Khalistan. Do not let this controversy divert and waste the resources of the Sikh Nation from the preservation of our religion and culture.

It is vitally important that the Akal Takht Jathedar, the spiritual leader of the Sikh religion, be committed to the well-

being of the Sikh Nation. Preserving its history, religion, culture, and scripture is essential to that well-being, especially when it is under assault from Hindus who are trying to subsume the Sikh religion and culture into those of the Hindus as part of Hindutva. Remember that a former Cabinet minister said that everyone who lives in India must either be a Hindu or be subservient to Hindus. But also remember the words of your predecessor, Professor Darshan Singh, who said, "If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh."

Jathedar Vedanti, the duty of the Jathedar of the Akal Takht is to protect, promote, and disseminate the Sikh religion. How can we do that within the framework of India when India is working to destroy the Sikh religion? The experience or the Jewish people shows that when a nation has sovereignty, it flourishes, but when it does not it perishes.

The only way to preserve, promote, and disseminate the Sikh religion and culture is in a free and sovereign Khalistan. Yet when Sikh leaders in Punjab were arrested last year simply for making speeches and raising the Khalistani flag, we did not hear a word of protest from the Akal Takht. Nor did we hear a protest of the actions of the Badal government in Punjab, the most corrupt in Punjab's history. The Badal government even sold jobs—they called it "fee for service" and Mrs. Badal was able to tell how much money was in a bag just by picking it up.

Please do not let your energy be diverted to issues like the Dasam Granth, which has long been known to be altered. We need every Sikh to help bring freedom, dignity, prosperity, and security in a free, sovereign, independent Khalistan. Discussion of issues like the Dasam Granth merely diverts the Khalsa Panth from freedom and sets back the cause of protecting the Khalsa Panth.

Panth Da Sewadar,

DR. GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,

President, Council of Khalistan.

A VERY FINE LADY—INDEED—A TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF DR. RACHEL HANNAH CELESTINE BOONE KEITH

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, tonight I rise to pay tribute to a champion of humanity. Dr. Rachel Hannah Celestine Boone Keith lived an exemplary life, one filled with kindness and caring towards others. She was an exceptional woman who genuinely cared about those around her and was always quick to lend a helping hand. I have known Dr. Keith for over 40 years. She was the wife of my dear friend, Judge Damon Keith. Judge Keith and I have been great friends for a very long time. I initially met Judge Keith when he was the law partner of my brother, Nathan Conyers. It is with a heavy heart that I make this tribute to Dr. Keith who gave so generously in life; she was a wonderful person and physician, she acted on behalf of those who could not help themselves, and she advocated vociferously for the health care rights of the community at large, she will truly be missed.

Rachel Hannah Celestine Boone was born on May 24, 1924, in Monrovia, Liberia. Her father and mother were Baptist medical mission-

aries who founded a church, ran a school, and provided medical services. She returned to the United States at the age of three, relocating with her family to Richmond, Virginia. She graduated from high school at the age of 13 and was the class valedictorian. Tragically, her mother died that same year. This loss is what prompted her to decide to become a doctor. After her mother's death, she relocated to Boston to live with her aunt, Dr. Bessie B. Tharps. Following in her aunt's footsteps, she attended the Boston University School of Medicine, where she attained the highest score ever recorded on a medical school exam.

In 1951, she relocated to Detroit to become only the second African-American female doctor to serve as a resident physician at the Detroit Receiving Hospital. It was soon after beginning her residency that she met Judge Keith, who was a young lawyer at the time. They were soon married and remained married for 53 years. My friend Damon has said of his wife, "She was the sweetest woman in the world. Her life was a by-product of how she was raised. She was very religious. She was not pushy or demanding. She saw her life as one of service." Judge Keith and Dr. Keith had three wonderful daughters, Cecile, Debbie, and Gilda. She was a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother who taught her children that they were raised to live a simple life.

Professionally, Dr. Keith gave tirelessly to her patients. She was a trained internist who was in private practice over 40 years. During that long tenure, she never turned any patient away based on their inability to pay.

Though she was a strong supporter of her husband and gentle in demeanor, Dr. Keith was exceptionally effective as a leader in developing community unity, and in developing and establishing new ways to deliver health care. She was an early health care activist and far ahead of her time in understanding the importance of health care being universal to all.

In addition to being a strong medical presence in the community, she was heavily involved in civic and social matters. She served on the board of over 20 medical organizations and 18 non-profit groups. She was also honored with numerous awards and honorary degrees. Madam Speaker, the world is a better place because Dr. Keith was here; she will be deeply missed, but her spirit and love that she shared with others will live on indefinitely. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to enter the homegoing celebration program of Dr. Rachel Hannah Celestine Boone Keith into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

DR. RACHEL HANNAH CELESTINE BOONE KEITH

Rachel Keith was born Rachel Hannah Celestine Boone on May 30, 1924, in Monrovia, Liberia. Her parents, Reverends Clinton C. Boone and Rachel Tharps Boone, were Baptist medical missionaries. Her grandfather, Reverend Lemuel Washington Boone, was a founding trustee of Shaw University. Rachel came to the United States at age three and began her schooling at Paul Laurence Dunbar Elementary School in Richmond, Virginia. She graduated from Armstrong High School in 1938 at the age of 13 as valedictorian of her class. That same year, she lost her mother and moved with her aunt, Dr. Bessie B. Tharps, to Rhode Island. In 1943, as the only African-American student at Houghton College in upstate New York, Rachel graduated magna cum laude and second